which is awaited. A provision of Rs. 35 crores has been made during the 11th Five Year Plan for development/upgradation of Hubli airport for operation of AB-320 type of aircrafts.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. However declaration of airports as international airports is undertaken on the basis of demands, traffic potential, land availability, resources, commercial viability etc. Considering these factors, at present, there is no possiblity of declaring Hubli as an international airport.

Plans to operate non-stop flights

2276. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government plans to operate non-stop flights to some distant countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Central Government to operate non-stop flights to distant countries to reduce travel time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Air India have informed that they plan to operate direct flights to New York and Chicago after acquisition of new Long Range aircraft.

(c) Subject to availability of traffic rights, the actual operations to any destination in a foreign country are decided by the airlines as per their commercial judgement.

Air congestion surcharge

2277. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has requested the various airlines not to impose congestion surcharge;

(b) if so, whether private airlines operators have responded positively to his request by withdrawing air congestion surcharge of Rs. 150 per passenger;

(c) if not, whether Government propose to take stern action against these airlines;

(d) the total amount collected as on 15th February, 2007 by each airlines on account of this surcharge, airline-wise; and

(e) whether private airlines are also charging passenger surcharge on sectors where air congestion does not exist and if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) DGCA has asked all scheduled airlines to withdraw the congestion surcharge.

(b) The airlines have been given a week's time (upto 21.3.2007) to respond.

(c) Domestic air fares are not regulated by the Government after the repeal of Air Corporation Act 1953. Domestic Airlines are free to charge air fares in their commercial judgement.

(d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(e) Private Scheduled airline are charging Air Congestion Surcharge on their entire network.

Construction of airport in Sikkim

2278. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any comprehensive scheme and programme for construction of airport in Sikkim;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details of financial assistance granted to Sikkim for development and construction of airport during the year, 2006-07 in Sikkim; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor and by when the above airport is likely to be constructed?